

PLANTING TREES (SAPLINGS)

GUIDE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

EQUIPMENT:

- Children's gardening gloves (for each child participating)
- Adult gardening gloves (for each adult participating)
- 1 spade (not essential, depends on the ground)
- Trowels (1 between 2 children)
- Bamboo sticks
- Tree saplings (whips)
- Watering can or water bottles

Plant trees in winter when they are "dormant"

Did you know?!
The term 'whip' is used in forestry to refer to a young tree sapling of approx. 0.5-1.0 m



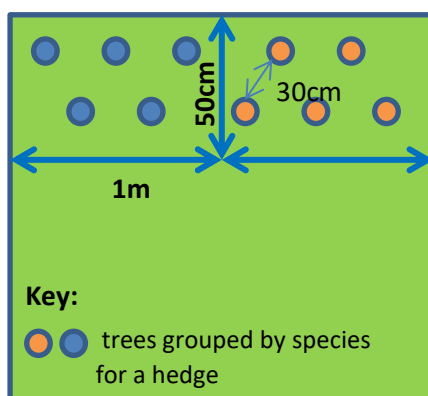
Tree whips with roots wrapped in plastic to protect them drying out

This workshop can be done in 45 minutes for 15 – 30 tree saplings. For 60 tree saplings leave at least an hour. If you have more saplings or the soil is particularly hard to dig leave a bit more time or run multiple workshops so that more children can have a go.

PREP THE PLANTING SPACE:

You may need to do some prep work on the planting space, including weeding and digging over. You can do this with or without the children, depending on their age, capabilities and the time frame you have available.

- If the ground is hard, you will need to dig over the soil to make it loose and crumbly so the children can dig.
- Mark out where your trees will go using bamboo canes
- Locate the closest tap and fill up your watering can / water bottles.



Hedge Measure out roughly 1 m x 0.5 m for each 5 trees.

For a hedge, 5 trees of the same species should go in each rectangle. Put a bamboo cane in the ground to mark where each tree will be planted.

Woodland: If you are planting trees individually or as a new mini woodland area you want 3 metres between trees eventually. You can plant 80 cm apart if you thin out your saplings in future years, as some will fail.

INTRODUCTION (3-5 MINS)

Start by introducing why trees are so important.

Q: Why do we plant trees?

A: Habitat for animals, food for people and animals, oxygen, to clean our air, to make the place look beautiful.

Q: What do trees need to grow?

A: Sunlight, water, space, nutrients from the soil.

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DIVIDE THE CHILDREN INTO GROUPS

If you have a class of 30 children, divide them into two groups – diggers and planters. A digger and a planter will form a pair and plant together. If you have 15 trees each pair will plant one tree, if you have 30 trees each pair will plant 2 trees so will be able to swap roles.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Ask the children what they may need to be safe while touching the soil (A: gloves). All children (and adults) touching the soil must wear gloves due to risk of animal faeces and glass. Help children to put on their gloves the right way around.

DIGGING

Q: What is this (*pointing to a trowel*)

A: Trowel (trowel owl).

Make sure all the children can see what you are doing. Teach them how to dig a hole:

- 1) Down
- 2) Wriggle, wriggle, wriggle
- 3) Up
- 4) Tip

The diggers then dig their hole. Thank them and ask them to step back. Do a quick check of the holes.

PLANTING

Planters step forward. Take one whip and show them where the roots begin.

Q: What do roots do?

A: Provide water and nutrients for the tree. Anchor the trees into the ground.

- It is important that only the roots are buried underground. If the tree is buried too deep, it may rot.
- Ask the planters to place their trees in the holes and then the diggers can hold the tree straight whilst the planter pushes the soil back into the hole with their hands. They may find this difficult and need help from an adult.
- Next step: Planters make scrunchy hands (fists) and push down the soil around the tree.
- If there are more trees to plant, diggers and planters can now swap roles.

WATERING

Q: Is there anything else we need to do?

A: Water the trees!

Tell the children (and staff) that the trees will need just one water when they go into the ground. In winter it is cold and wet so they won't need any more watering until the summer. The trees will appreciate some watering in the summer when it gets very hot and dry. If you can put wood chip around the base of the trees do, the children will enjoy doing this! Wood chip will really help with moisture retention and inhibit the growth of weeds.

Give the waterers a bottle each or one to share between two. Or use watering cans if the school has them. Ask them to water each tree for the count of three.

After the workshops: Check all the trees are planted to the right depth and securely in the ground by tugging them. Smooth over the soil with your hand so the ground is flat. Pack away your tools. If you've taken photos, please share with us on social media [@treesforcities](https://www.instagram.com/treesforcities).

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